WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method of displaying e-mail:

   maintaining a list of people associated with a user;

   receiving one or more e-mails directed to the user;

5   identifying senders of the received e-mail;

   comparing the identified senders to the maintained list of people associated with the user to determine which of the senders are included on the list

   displaying a list of the e-mail to the user; and

   sorting the displayed list based on which of the senders are included in the list.

10   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein sorting the display based on which of the senders are included in the list comprises sorting the display such that e-mails from people on the list are grouped in one position of the display.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein sorting the display based on which of the senders are included in the list comprises sorting the display such that e-mails from people on the list

15   are displayed and e-mails from people not on the list are not displayed.

4.   The method of claim 1 wherein sorting the display based on which of the senders are included in the list comprises sorting the display such that e-mails from people on the list are not displayed and e-mails from people on the list are not displayed.

5.   The method of claim1 further comprising:

20   inferring that a person is associated with the user based on positive user actions related to e-mail communications from the person;

   adding the inferred person to the list.

6.   The method of claim 5 wherein the positive actions include sending an e-mail to the person.

25   7.   The method of claim 5 wherein the positive actions include replying to, forwarding, saving, or printing an e-mail received from the person.

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8.   The method of claim 5 wherein the positive actions include moving an e-mail from a first folder to a second folder.

9.   The method of claim 8 wherein the first folder is an inbox folder and the second folder is a folder other than a delete folder or a spam folder.

10.   The method of claim 5 wherein the positive action includes leaving an e-mail from the person open for a predetermined period of time.

11.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:
inferring that a person is associated with the user based, at least in part, on detecting a communication between the user and the person:
adding the inferred person to the list.

12.   The method of claim 11 wherein the communication is an instant messaging communication.

13.   The method of claim 1 further comprising inferring that a person is associated with the user, wherein inferring comprises:
accessing a contact list of the user to determine a first contact on the user's contact list; and
accessing a contact list of the first contact to determine a second contact on the first contact's contact list.

14.   The method of claim 1 further comprising inferring that a person is associated with the user based, at least in part, on detecting user actions that negate an inference that a person is associated with the user.

15.   The method of claim 14 wherein the user actions comprise reporting a communication from the person as spam.

16.   The method of claim 14 wherein the user actions comprise adding a person to a blacklist.

17.   The method of claim 14 wherein the user actions comprise moving a communication from the person to either of a spam folder or a delete folder.

5   18.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

enabling the user to expressly designate a person as associated with the user; and

adding the designated person to the list.

19.   The method of claim 1 wherein the people associated with the user are people known to the user.

10   20.   A computer-usable medium having a computer program embodied thereon for displaying e-mail, the computer program comprising instructions for causing a computer to perform the following operations:

maintain a list of people associated with a user;

receive one or more e-mails directed to the user;

15   identify senders of the received e-mail;

compare the identified senders to the maintained list of people associated with the user to determine which of the senders are included on the list

display a list of the e-mail to the user; and

sort the displayed list based on which of the senders are included in the list.

20   21.   The medium of claim 20 wherein, to sort the display based on which of the senders are included in the list, the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to sort display such that e-mails from people on the list are grouped in one position of the display.

22.   The medium of claim 20 wherein, to sort the display based on which of the senders

25   are included in the list, the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a

computer to sort the display such that e-mails from people on the list are displayed and e-mails from people not on the list are not displayed.

23.   The medium of claim 20 wherein, to sorting the display based on which of the senders are included in the list, the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to sort the display such that e-mails from people on the list are not displayed and e-mails from people on the list are not displayed.

24.   The medium of claim 20 wherein the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to:

infer that a person is associated with the user based on positive user actions related to e-mail communications from the person;

add the inferred person to the list.

25.   The medium of claim 24 wherein the positive actions include sending an e-mail to the person.

26.   The medium of claim 24 wherein the positive actions include replying to, forwarding, saving, or printing an e-mail received from the person.

27.   The medium of claim 24 wherein the positive actions include moving an e-mail from a first folder to a second folder.

28.   The medium of claim 27 wherein the first folder is an inbox folder and the second folder is a folder other than a delete folder or a spam folder.

29.   The medium of claim 24 wherein the positive action includes leaving an e-mail from the person open for a predetermined period of time.

30.   The medium of claim 20 wherein the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to:

infer that a person is associated with the user based, at least in part, on detecting a

communication between the user and the person;

    add the inferred person to the list.

31.   The medium of claim 30 wherein the communication is an instant messaging communication.

32.   The medium of claim 20 wherein the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to infer that a person is associated with the user and wherein, to infer that a person is associated with the user, the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to:

    access a contact list of the user to determine a first contact on the user's contact list; and

    access a contact list of the first contact to determine a second contact on the first contact's contact list.

33.   The medium of claim 20 wherein the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to infer that a person is associated with the user based, at least in part, on detecting user actions that negate an inference that a person is associated with the user.

34.   The medium of claim 33 wherein the user actions comprise reporting a communication from the person as spam.

35.   The medium of claim 33 wherein the user actions comprise adding a person to a blacklist.

36.   The medium of claim 33 wherein the user actions comprise moving a communication from the person to either of a spam folder or a delete folder.

37.   The medium of claim 20 wherein the computer program further comprises instructions for causing a computer to:

enable the user to expressly designate a person as associated with the user; and

add the designated person to the list.

38.   The medium of claim 20 wherein the people associated with the user are people known to the user.

5   39.   An apparatus for displaying e-mail:

means for maintaining a list of people associated with a user;

means for receiving one or more e-mails directed to the user;

means for identifying senders of the received e-mail;

means for comparing the identified senders to the maintained list of people associated

10   with the user to determine which of the senders are included on the list

means for displaying a list of the e-mail to the user; and

means for sorting the displayed list based on which of the senders are included in the list.